



**California Building  
Industry Association**

1215 K Street  
Suite 1200  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916/443-7933  
fax 916/443-1960  
www.cbia.org

**2007 OFFICERS**

*Chairman*  
**WES KEUSDER**  
Keusder Homes  
Costa Mesa

*Vice Chairman*  
**RAY BECKER**  
DMB Associates  
Hollister

*CFO/Secretary*  
**HORACE HOGAN II**  
Brehm Communities  
Carlsbad

*President & CEO*  
**ROBERT RIVINIUS, CAE**  
Sacramento

**MEMBER  
ASSOCIATIONS**

Building Industry  
Association of  
Central California  
Modesto

Building Industry  
Association of the Delta  
Stockton

Building Industry  
Association of  
Fresno/Madera Counties  
Fresno

Building Industry  
Association of  
San Diego County  
San Diego

Building Industry  
Association of  
Southern California  
Diamond Bar

Home Builders  
Association of  
Central Coast  
San Luis Obispo

Home Builders  
Association of  
Kern County  
Bakersfield

Home Builders  
Association of  
Northern California  
San Ramon

Building Industry  
Association of  
Tulare & Kings Counties  
Visalia

North State Building  
Industry Association  
Sacramento

November 28, 2007

Honorable Phillip Isenberg, Chairman  
Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force  
650 Capitol Mall, 5th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **Third Draft Vision, "Our Vision for the Delta" (Revised  
November 19, 2007) – Recommendations for Near Term  
Actions to Support the Vision for California's Delta**

Dear Chairman Isenberg and Task Force Members:

California homebuilders, represented by the California Building Industry Association (CBIA), take this opportunity to comment on the subject document, referred to in this letter as "Our Vision III", recently published by the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force ("the Task Force").

CBIA is concerned that the document fails to give meaningful direction to the Governor, lawmakers and policy makers on what needs to be done to protect and preserve the environmental health of the Delta and ensure its long-term facility as a system to convey water from Northern California to an increasingly thirsty south state. Instead, the authors of Our Vision III devote more commentary to criticizing development – and making recommendations on their unsubstantiated findings – rather than addressing the problems that are laid out clearly in Executive Order S-17-06 and the twelve objectives the Task Force has established as the essential elements of its vision for the Delta.

It's true that the executive order speaks also to flood-protection as does Our Vision III. However, as the Task Force knows, the flood-safety issue recently completed a rigorous, three-year debate in the Legislature, culminating in the passage this year of several flood-protection bills. Indeed, every issue raised by Our Vision III in regards to flood protection is addressed in legislation such as SB 5 (Machado), AB 70 (Jones), AB 162 (Wolk) and others. All of these bills were signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger in October of this year. CBIA has provided copies of the bills and the press release issued by the Governor's office regarding his approval of them for Task Force review.

Given these facts, therefore, the recommendations in Our Vision III dealing with flood protection – including those that would lead to building moratoria, a strategy flatly rejected by the Legislature – should be removed from the document and in their place provide the appropriate and proper recognition of the policy changes represented by the bills.

Where it does address water issues, Our Vision III makes unsubstantiated assertions that housing is a substantial barrier to conveyance. For example, the document claims that a stable water export system can't be guaranteed "if urban encroachment continues" but fails to say how or why. Failing to include some justification for this claim makes it nearly impossible to accept or understand its corresponding recommendation – that the state adopt ambiguous "raw land development" standards as a solution. With such dramatic claims being made, Our Vision III owes it to policy makers, decision-makers and the public a thorough and complete explanation of how the Task Force sees housing development affecting the environmental health of the Delta and how housing – new or old – impedes the flow of water through the Delta's conveyance system. Indeed, without a full and reasoned discussion of the bald claims and recommendations Our Vision makes, it's unclear what public policy objective is being served.

Our Vision III goes on to recommend that "primary zone" and "secondary zone" boundaries be changed and that a new land-use governance system be put in place. Not only is it unclear what public policy objective these boundary changes and new bureaucracy would serve, it is equally ambiguous what they would do.

This is a recurring problem of Our Vision III. In reviewing the document and its "scientific back-up" document, it appears that very little analysis and research went into the findings and recommendations they make. Most of the recommendations – particularly those regarding land use and housing – are made without providing meaningful evidence of what problem is being solved or a description of how the recommendation will accomplish the stated objectives of Executive Order S-17-06. Indeed, instead of compiling information to support well-reasoned recommendations as to what the state of California can do to preserve and protect the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, Our Vision III reads like an editorial advocating limits on homebuilding and development in the Northern San Joaquin Valley region.

It appears to CBIA that the Task Force, in generating Our Vision III, has lost sight of its objective – coming up with guidance for the Governor, lawmakers and policy makers to follow in restoring the health of the Delta and determining or affirming the capability of its endemic water conveyance system to carry the Sierra Nevada's annual snowmelt south. Worse, its authors appear to have simply dusted off previously shelved proposals such as building moratoria and other limits on development to make a political statement about growth. In doing so, Our Vision III overlooks one of the foundational tenets of the Governor's 2006 Executive Order that gave rise to the Delta Vision effort:

*The Delta is a source of water for farmlands, growing communities and businesses and provides a unique estuarine habitat for many resident and migratory fish and birds . . .*

This critical observation underscores a theme about dealing with growth that Governor Schwarzenegger has used time and time again: "That a strong economy can coexist with a thriving and sustainable environment." It's a statement about balance which, unfortunately, the Our Vision III treatise lacks.

CBIA strongly recommends that the Task Force review both the public record on flood-protection policy and the Governor's executive order, founding the Delta Vision effort, before making necessary and substantial revisions to Our Vision III.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Tim Coyle", with a stylized, cursive script.

Timothy L. Coyle  
Senior Vice President

Attachments